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MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

WE were enabled last month to lay before our readers, in a note, an account of the armistice concluded between Bonaparte and the Archduke Charles, on the 12th of July, after the battle of Wagram. Since then all hostile operations, in that quarter, have been suspended; and though we may suppose that the terms of a treaty between such unequal parties would speedily be arranged, we have no authentic intelligence that it has yet actually been concluded.

We have now commenced operations on a large scale upon another part of the Continent; an expedition consisting, navy and army, of more than 100,000 men, having sailed for the coast of Holland. The principal one proposed by ministry is, the permanent occupation of the islands composing the Province of Zealand and a less important object is the capture of the enemy's ships in the Scheldt, and the destruction of the naval arsenals in the city of Amsterdam. We think, with

the exception of the ships, which may be taken or destroyed by great exertion, and without any *Basque Roads'* calculation of the loss and extreme risk that must be incurred, that none of the other objects can be accomplished. The attack upon Antwerp would now be almost hopeless from the time that has elapsed since the enemy were aware of our design, and the number of troops they have consequently drawn together for its defence; and when the capture of Flushing &c. where little resistance was expected, has cost so much, we will hardly now encounter the more formidable means prepared to defend Antwerp, which is of so much greater importance.

As to the permanent occupation of Walcheren and the other islands lying in the mouth of the Scheldt, we really conceive it unnecessary to enlarge on the improbability of our being able to keep possession of them, farther than to state that they are surrounded by narrow channels impracticable to ships of war, and must therefore be defended by boats and troops, of which assuredly Bonaparte can furnish more on those shores than we, even should the ice in a severe winter not allow him a passage; and we need not entertain a doubt, but that he will make use of all the resources of his empire to expel us from his near neighbourhood.

Some of our troops from Sicily have made a descent upon and taken a small island in the bay of Naples; and we hear of others made on different parts of the Neapolitan coast, with the additional circumstance, that multitudes of the natives are flocking to join the English standard. This latter part we do not believe; they could only expect from us to be returned under the dominion of Ferdinand IV. which they don't desire, while from Joachim, their present master, they may at least expect to be put on a footing with the inhabitants of the Papal states, lately joined to their country by Bonaparte, and who are now enjoying some advantages from the change.

We consider it as the most unpromising circumstance belonging to

the present war, that Bonaparte combats us with *one* species of warfare, to which our government seems to have an insuperable aversion. Unfortunately this man commenced his career in a period of reform, when men's eyes were opened to abuses which they had long felt, and their reverence abated for old institutions become destructive of public happiness. He joined with ardour in the plan to ameliorate the condition of his country; and though the imbecility and wickedness of a few, led afterwards to his assumption of a power inconsistent with political liberty, yet he was not thereby deprived either of the power to see, or the will to execute schemes of substantial reform, both in his own and in those countries that have successively fallen under his influence. In this view of him he has been peculiarly formidable to the Continental governments, who in the hour of danger have found their people hesitating and doubtful, whether the advantages to be derived from a new master might not overbalance their present condition, even superadding the attachment which must naturally be felt for a long established order of things. Our ministry seem to look on him with contempt as a reformer, confident in the *purity* of our institutions, and the *equal* rights and liberty enjoyed by all the subjects of these realms; and although eager to fight him in every other possible way, they refuse absolutely to enter the lists as reformers of either the real or imaginary abuses of our constitution and government. For our own part, we conceive that in a government so constitutionally popular as this is, some deference should be paid to public opinion, and that a prudent minister ought to discover an inclination to examine into, and correct grievances loudly proclaimed by the voice of the people, should they be even trivial in a national point of view, or merely the effect of irritation and misapprehension on the part of the public.

Wisdom consists in the due adaptation of means to an end; and the wisdom of a statesman is equally shown in yielding at a proper time,

as by inflexible firmness at another: we trust that our rulers may not over shoot the mark, and by endeavouring to avoid culpable weakness degenerate into a blind and persevering obstinacy.

We are led to these remarks, by observing an article from Rome, announcing the abolition of the inquisition, of the temporal jurisdiction of the clergy, and of the right of asylum, which sheltered more than a thousand criminals every year in that state alone, from the punishment of the law, with many other wholesome regulations for that hitherto ill-governed territory. Bonaparte has thus conferred a boon on this portion of his new dominions, which will cause them to feel small regret for their late master, although that master was the head of the Catholic church; and, indeed, he contrives to repay those countries that submit to his sway, by removing from them that hideous mass of corruption which degraded their moral and physical characters.

Is it possible to contemplate this man's conduct, whose will is his law, and without the most indignant feeling, contrast it with that of a government over the freest people on the face of the earth! or hear *him*, with few claims on the affection or attachment of his subjects, but the splendour of his name, and a stern republican hatred of corruption and peculation in every department of his government; to hear *him* tell them that he does not *fear* to persevere in reforming the secular concerns of the clergy, to detach them from the state and bring them back to their original simplicity of character; and not feel poignant regret, when the official guardians and administrators of a constitution formed for the happiness of mankind, and possessing every claim to their regard, unblushingly refuse to extend its benefits to the nation, to remove any of its time-created imperfections, or disencumber the church of rubbish, which threatens to overwhelm it, from a pretended *fear* that the people's attachment might be shaken, or the sacred edifice overturned! No instance has ever yet occurred of a government being endangered by purity of administra-

tion, or a solicitous attention to the wishes and happiness of the governed.

The accounts from Spain are not of a nature to induce any change in the opinions formerly expressed by us, as to the disposition and spirit of the "entire Spanish nation." General Blake's affecting relation of the disgraceful behaviour of his troops, and the *mysterious* conduct of Cuesta's army, at the battle of Talavera, place their patriotism in a most suspicious, but we fear in the real point of view. Sir Arthur Wellesley, after his junction with Cuesta, had advanced as far as Talavera de la Reyna, on his route towards Madrid, when the combined army, or rather that portion of it under the command of Sir Arthur, was attacked by the French, commanded by Joseph Bonaparte in person, assisted by Jourdan, Victor, and Sebastiani, on the 27th of July. After repeated and desperate attacks by the whole French force on the *British troops*, during that day and night, and till the evening of the 28th, they retired from the field of battle, leaving the latter possessed of their original position. From the imperfect manner in which Sir Arthur's dispatches are given to the public, we are left totally in the dark as to the numbers of the respective armies, or the conduct of the Spaniards during the engagement;—farther than this, that he asserts the French to have been double the number of his own troops, and leaves us to infer, that Cuesta, with about 40,000 men, was spectator of a sanguinary and unequal conflict, during a night and two days, without making a single effort for his relief, or to decide a victory which might have been so beneficial to his country. The people of these countries have a *right* to be made acquainted with Sir Arthur's sentiments on this occasion, that they may know still more explicitly whether we are the cherished allies of a nation fighting for independence, or are dragging a reluctant people forward to a contest, about the issue of which they are altogether indifferent. Sir John Moore gave us some insight into these things, who, with a large portion of his army, we may say, was sacrificed to the too partial opinion of the public respecting Spain; and if Sir Arthur Wellesley coincides with him, as to the probable

result of a Spanish war, the public, undeceived, and hopeless of attaining a favourite object, should now urge his recall, and his brave companions in arms, and not sanction, by their silence, the pertinacity of ministers, which may lead to an equally disastrous termination of this campaign.

The only consolatory reflection arising from the battle of Talavera, is, that both officers and men have nobly sustained their own and their country's honour.

Recent intelligence from America informs us of the universal consternation spread through that country, when news arrived there, that the arrangements made by Mr. Erskine were disavowed by our ministry. This is exactly what we expected; and even were conciliatory measures to be now adopted, which we do not hope for, the impression made on that people by our conduct would not soon be removed.

ENGLAND.

"Why weeps the Muse for England? what appears

In England's cause to move the muse to tears?

From side to side of her delightful isle,
Is she not cloth'd with a perpetual smile?
Where under Heav'n is pleasure more pursued,

Or where does cold reflection less intrude?
All speak her happy—let the muse look round,

From east to west no sorrow can be found,
Or only what in cottages confin'd
Sighs unregarded to the passing wind.

Then wherefore weep for England, what appears

In England's cause to move the muse to tears?

Thy rulers load thy credit year by year,
With sums Peruvian mines could never clear,

As if like arches built with skilful hand,
The more 'twere press'd, the firmer it would stand.

Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,
Chaos of contrarieties at war,
Where sharp, and solid, phlegmatic and light

Discordant atoms meet, ferment and fight,
Where flails of oratory thresh the floor,
That yields them chaff, and dust, and nothing more.

Thy rack'd inhabitants repine, complain,
Tax'd till the brow of labour sweats in vain,
War lays a burden on a reeling state,
And Peace does nothing to relieve the weight;

Successive loads succeeding broils impose,

And sighing millions prophesy the close.
If business, constant as the wheels of time,
Can pause one hour to read a serious rhyme,

If the new mail thy merchants now receive,

Or expectation of the next give leave.

Oh! THINK"——— COWPER.

Such was the pathetic language of this justly celebrated poet upwards of 20 years ago, as extracted from his poem entitled "The i xpostulation." Had he lived in the full vigour of his powers to behold the dreadful volcanic eruption from the wars which have arisen out of the French revolution, or had he lived to the present day to behold the national debt, of the weight of which he then complained, increased more than four fold, in what terms would he have expressed his sense of the dangers of his country?

In addition to the dangerous delusions which he points out, we may add another, the facility with which we suffer ourselves to be duped by such information as flatters our prejudices. The fabricators of news in the public prints, more desirous to promote the sale of their papers by telling what they think will be pleasing to their readers, than to undertake the unwelcome task of depicting our real situation, encourage this deceptive view. The current of events has been generally unfavourable, and yet the people have been led on, year after year, with false hopes, and no sooner is defeat confirmed, than our news-writers immediately fill their columns with vague reports, tending to raise false hopes, and to blunt the poignancy of regret for past miscarriages. These artifices have been so often used, it is astonishing that the people render such facile credit to the delusive day-dreams; we consider this predisposition to credulity to be the epidemic of the day, and feel it our duty to warn our readers against this proneness to believe well of our state even in opposition to the clearest demonstrations of conviction:

—"Another tale soon shall arise,
Another day salute oureyes,
As smiling, and as fair as she,
And make as many promises;
But do not thou the tale believe,
They're sisters all, and all deceive."

Protected by our insular state, we have little to fear from the overwhelming influence of Bonaparte, if we avail ourselves of our situation and keep ourselves from intermeddling in the affairs of the Continent, and by wise concessions and salutary reforms promote unanimity at home. Since the fatal commencement of the war in 1793, our interference on the Continent has been unfavourable to ourselves, and ruinous to our allies. Bonaparte uses other means than merely the power of the sword to effectuate his purposes. He introduces salutary reforms, and ameliorates the condition of the lower classes of the community. In Spain he abolishes the inquisition, and lessens the number of the convents. These alterations are not solely effected by his power as a conqueror, but as they meet the wishes of the people over whom he or his newly created kings assume dominion, and as they relieve them from former oppressions, he has a powerful auxiliary in their good will and their secret wishes for his success. "The universal Spanish nation" did not vigorously oppose him. This important truth was strongly impressed in the correspondence of the lamented Sir John Moore. For a time some impression was made on the public mind, but the effect was speedily obliterated by the efforts of a venal press seconding the popular disposition to be deceived, and we were again told of the noble struggles of Spanish patriotism in the cause of their beloved Ferdinand. But to those who are disposed to see and judge for themselves, this flimsy web of sophistry is again broken by the recent letter of general Blake, giving an account of the shameful and treacherous retreat of the Spaniards. Sir John Moore's statement has thus received unwelcomed confirmation. At Rome Bonaparte has taken away the temporal power of the Pope, and confined him to his spiritual functions. He has also abolished the inquisition and the right of asylum, by which criminals escaped from the justice of the laws. It is most probable that all these alterations were brought about by the hearty consent of the people; a few cardinals and inquisitors might be dissatisfied

with the abridgement of their power, but the people, "their country's pride," and real support, form the strong basis of a government, of which the first act was to remove the grievances of which they had so just cause to complain.

It is right to receive instruction even from an enemy; we confidently hope that if the three estates of our legislature would combine with full heart and hand to alleviate the burdens of the community, restrain the torrent of corruption, redress just grievances, remove all unequal disabilities, and allow the people a fair representation in their own branch of the legislature, we might defy the threats of Bonaparte against us, thus rendered completely impotent by our unanimity, and our consequent internal strength. The advocates for reform, are in our view the best friends to *stability*.

On the 9th inst. a meeting of the freeholders of the county of Middlesex was held at Hackney. Major Cartwright introduced the subject of parliamentary reform in a long appropriate speech, and concluded by moving resolutions in favour of it, which, and a petition to the house of commons afterwards proposed, were with very few dissentients finally agreed to. He likewise proposed a petition to the king, but which was for the present rejected. We subjoin the resolutions and sincerely wish that the adoption of them, or similar ones may become general. Many sound arguments in favour of this most necessary reform were adduced by Major Cartwright, who pointed out in strong terms the inconsistent reasoning of the Earl of Selkirk, who in his late pamphlet has become the advocate of the borough-monger system, and showed that the *real landmarks* of the constitution had been removed by this iniquitous system of selling seats in parliament. Mr. Bentley adduced many instances of speculation, and the enormity of charges in the public accounts, which had arisen from the present lax system, and the want of vigilance in the house of commons not being the watchful guardians of the public purse. Among other flagrant enormities he mentioned a charge of 735*l.* as fees of office for paying 10,000*l.* to Dr.

Jenner, the well merited parliamentary remuneration for his successful labours in the cause of vaccination.

In the course of the discussion, which took place at this meeting. Mr. Hare Townsend also produced the following statement of the charges payable on his farm renting 160*l.* per annum.

Land tax	16	8	5
Property tax	31	6	4
Poor rates	47	5	10
Great tithes	39	2	6
Little tithes	11	5	0
County rate	10	17	3
Church rate	1	13	6

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He was lately called upon by the lay impropiator of the parish of Godalmin, for an increase of tithes. This he called a *finishing pull*, which by extreme tension must break the bow at last ; such is the present weight of taxation!

It remains to be seen how far this example of Middlesex will be followed by other counties in the united empire ; unless the people are generally unanimous in their demands on this subject, we may be certain that parliament in the next session will continue to scout the idea of reform.

We likewise subjoin the resolutions of the Common Council of the City of London, in which instead of retracting their former vote of thanks in favour of Colonel Wardle, as a few were desirous of doing, they have given to him additional thanks for his perseverance in his struggles against corruption. In this instance the efforts of the advocates for abuses have recoiled on themselves, and they have been only the unwilling instruments of placing additional honours on the brows of the man, who in this instance, let his demerits in other cases be as they may, has deserved well of his country.

We understand that Colonel Wardle has declared his intentions of prosecuting Mary Ann Clarke for perjury on the late trial. But in what way soever this event turn out, we repeat our former opinion, that the authenticity of the charges against the Duke of York is not invalidated ; for they

are not to be judged of by her credibility, but by the *irrefragable* collateral evidence, which came out in the course of the investigation.

It is a curious subject of inquiry by what means this noted lady has now become an agent in the hands of the opposite party and has industriously been used by the anti-reformers as an engine in their cause. When the subject of the bargain she made for the suppression of her book is more fully developed, it may probably be found, that her late conduct is in conformity to the engagement she then entered into, and forms a part of the services, for which, and for the suppression of her "family secrets," it is said by annuities and otherwise, she has received the enormous sum of 20,000*l.*—She has thus extorted from the fears, and the party views of some, a much larger sum than she claimed as an act of justice.

We are told that a reconciliation has taken place among the junior members of the royal family and as the seal of reconciliation, the Prince of Wales at a dinner which he gave at Brighton, in honour of his birth day, when Colonel Fitzpatrick, Richard B. Sheridan and other members of parliament were present, gave the health of the Duke of York, with the following curious addition,—“ May the army never have a less able commander in chief, nor the old soldier a worse friend.” But we trust the people will not be led aside to forget the glaring corruptions which lately forced themselves into notice in the army department, nor be led to pardon or palliate meretricious influence in procuring commissions.

As a nation we appear to be rapidly adopting a military character. Among the mercantile classes, conversation assumes a military tone, and the discussion of politics seems narrowing to one point, the praise of military heroism, to the exclusion of the more appropriate business of the peaceful citizen watching with constitutional jealousy the schemes of the politician. “ Things as they are,” and “ Peace in our day,” as a mean for indulging in the wonted luxuries, are the prevailing accents, and with toasting the

healths or the memories of military or naval commanders form a large portion of modern convivial conversation. But is this what the times require? The approaching crisis requires the bracing of a sterner morality, to escape the whirlwind, which has swept away so many old establishments on the Continent. We deprecate our nation becoming totally military, and all the train of evils consequent on such an order of things. Let us rather study the arts of peace, by securing ourselves by wise precautionary regulations in our domestic situation; and giving all a common interest in the general weal. By such a line of procedure, and by becoming practical reforming politicians, and not military talkers, is the security of the united empire most likely to be effected. Radical reform, both economical and political is our best protection against the overwhelming legions of France, and to this yet untried source of strength, we wish especially to be the instruments of turning the public attention.

SCOTLAND.

At Paisley, as well as at some places in England, riots have taken place among the local militia. Some of the rioters at Paisley were taken up, and sentenced to be whipped—but in the execution of this sentence the officers were attacked by a number of women, and compelled to retreat. The present state of Europe being forced to assume so much of the military character, gives room to portentous forebodings that military riots may often be dreaded.

IRELAND.

Sedulously attentive to the concerns of our native isle, and to the rise and fall of public spirit on the scale of the political thermometer, we congratulate our country on the conduct of the Associate Anti-Burgher Synod of Seceders in Ireland, at their meeting held lately in Belfast. A question was proposed, whether if the regium donum were offered to them, coupled with the plan of classification, and other obnoxious terms, it would be right of them to accept of it? The question was unanimously determined in the negative. We think they are entitled to the thanks of their country for this instance of self-denial, more especially

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as we understand the present incomes of many of them are extremely limited, and in several instances, less than the amount expected to be conferred by the allowance from government. A people imbued with the principles of freedom tend to make a priesthood of a similar cast, as an enlightened and virtuous people would compel the government to display the like qualities: for in all cases both in churches and states, the rulers may be considered as marking the index of the state of public opinion, the influence of which for any long continuance, they are unable to resist.

The cause of favouritism in the county of Armagh has lately received a severe check, by the trial and execution of Alexander Bell, an account of which is given from an authentic source among the domestic occurrences of this month. The judge (Baron McClelland) who presided at the trial, reprobated in strong terms, the permitting of so atrocious an offender to continue unpunished for upwards of three years. We trust that this instance of even-handed justice, though so dreadful in its stroke, will have the effect of allaying the party feuds which have so long distracted the county of Armagh, and which, to its pre eminent disgrace, first originated there, and have since been cherished by many to the present day. The event of this trial will, we trust, give confidence to the one party, that they may reasonably look for the protection of equal laws *equitably administered*, and that the other party will be convinced, that the power of favouritism, or party influence, will not be able to protect them in the violation of the laws. Government resisted an application to have the sentence changed into transportation for life, from a conviction, that it was necessary, by a severe example, to enforce the due and impartial administration of the laws in that county.

We hear, that at Omagh, some serious disturbances have lately taken place between some Yeomen and Orangemen, and a party of the King's county militia, which afford another proof of the dangers to be apprehended from the prevailing increase of a military system pervading so large a

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portion of our population. In the present instance, this tendency to danger was still farther increased by the highly injudicious stimulus of party politics.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.

At a meeting of the Freeholders of the county of Middlesex, held at Hackney on the 9th inst.

IT WAS RESOLVED;

That in a petition presented to, and entered on the Journals of the House of Commons on the 6th of May, 1793, it was averred, and offered to be proved at the bar, "that 154 individuals (Peers and others) did, by their own authority, appoint or procure the return of 307 members of that house (exclusive of those from Scotland) who were thus enabled to decide all questions in the name of the whole people of Great Britain."

That in a report lately presented to the said House, it appears that a large proportion of the members thereof are placemen and pensioners, dependant on the crown.

That in a petition presented to the said House, and entered on its Journals, on the 9th of December, 1790, it was averred, that "seats therein were as notoriously rented and bought as the standings for cattle at a fair," which assertion was then presented in that house as "scandalous and libellous." But when Lord Castlereagh was, on the 11th of May last, accused of having sold a seat, he was screened from punishment on the plea of the extreme notoriety of the practice; a practice which various of its members unblushingly justified.

That when seats in the Commons-house of Parliament are bought and sold, the people, their laws and liberties, are bought and sold.

That while these corruptions continue to exist, the people are deprived of their lawful share of the government, by representation in the Commons-house of parliament, which share has been usurped by a corrupt and unconstitutional oligarchy of borough-mongers.

That Reform on constitutional principles encourages to hope that the expenses, disorders and tumults attending elections would be avoided—the rights and liberties of the people secured—taxes reduced—the unequal and grievous impositions of the property tax removed, and future burthens prevented, corruption then would be no longer necessary, much less avowed to be necessary for the administration of public affairs.

That the king and his people have but

one interest, but borough-mongers have an interest separate from each, and inimical to both, and as a complete Reform in the representation, is the only means of destroying the corrupt influence of the latter, so it is particularly requisite in these times for the preservation of both king and people.

That the thanks of this meeting be given to Sir F. Burdett, bart. for calling on the house to take into consideration the necessity of Reform in the representation; that he be requested to renew his motion early in the next session. And that we recommend to counties, cities, large towns, and boroughs, to press the subject on the attention of the house of commons, by respectful and earnest petitions.

It was moved and seconded that a petition be presented to the honourable House of Commons, which petition having been read and agreed to, it was resolved—

That the petition now read be signed by the sheriffs and freeholders, and delivered to George Byng, esq. to be presented to the house.

That George Byng, esq. and William Mellish, esq. our representatives in parliament, are hereby instructed to support the same.

That the thanks of this meeting be given to George Byng, esq. one of our representatives, for his general conduct in parliament, and for his efforts in favour of a constitutional reform in the representation.—(carried unanimously.)

That the Thanks of this meeting be given to Joshua Jonathan Smith, esq. and Claudius Stephen Hunter, esq. the high-sheriff of the county, for their attention to the freeholders, in so promptly calling this meeting, and for their impartial conduct in the chair this day.—(carried unanimously.)

That an address to his Majesty be now read and considered.

The address to the king having been read;

It was resolved,

That this court having already determined to present a petition to the House of Commons, any further petition or address is at present unnecessary.

That the above resolutions be signed by the sheriff, and published in the newspapers.

J. J. SMYTH,
CLAUDIUS S. HUNTER, } Sheriff.

That the thanks of this meeting be given to Major Cartwright, for his perseverance and ability in the cause of parliamentary reform.